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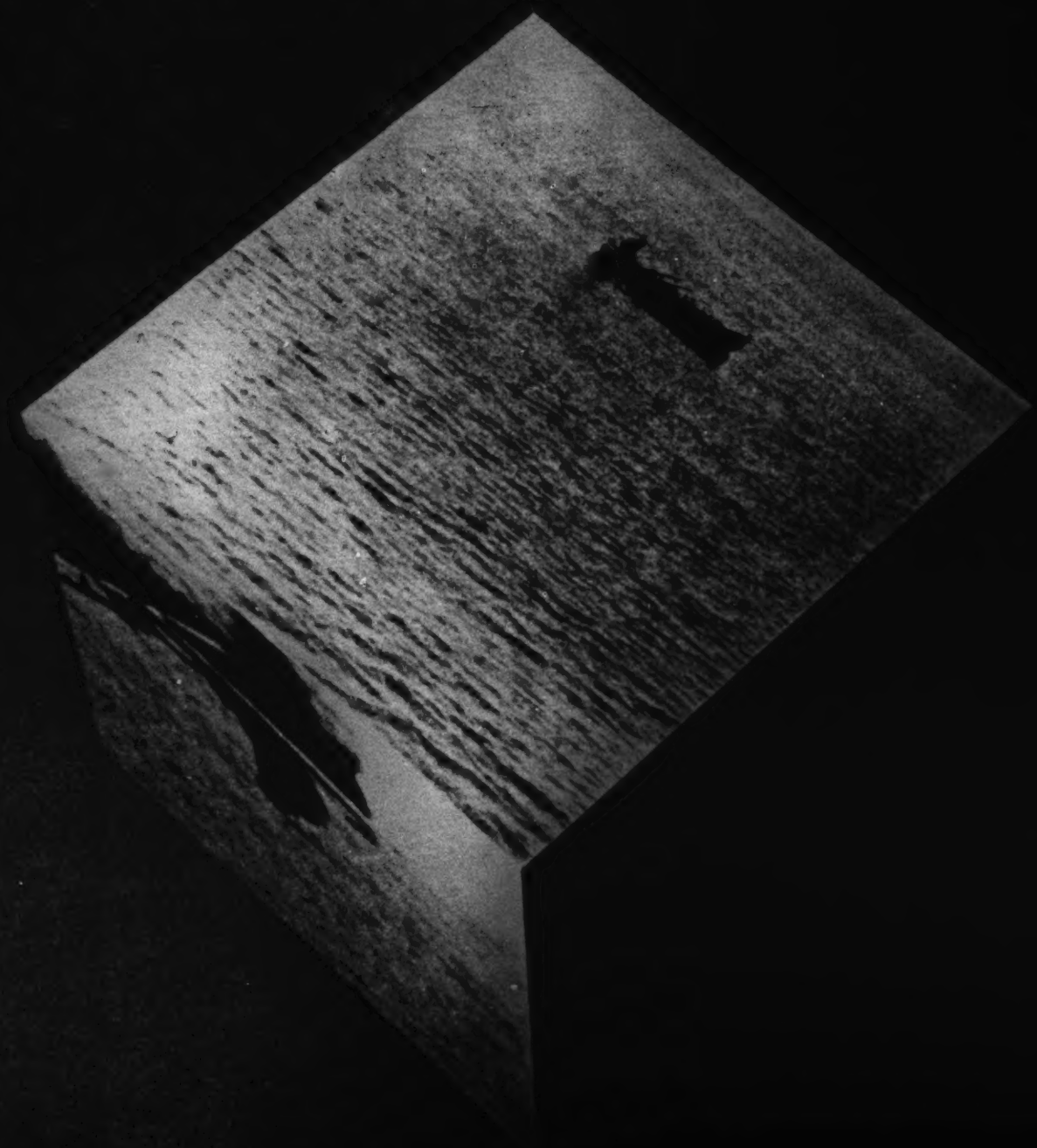
General

Xante Battaglia
critical notes
by Gregory Battcock
Bonino Gallery
New York City



Xante Battaglia (right)
with Gregory Battcock
Biennale Venice's Gardens
1976

The works

Iconographic microcosms

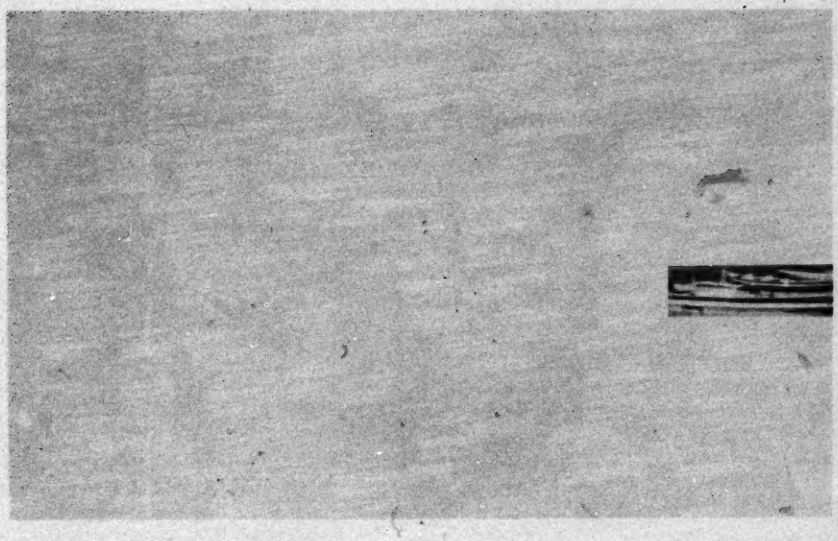
1
Boy, 1975, photographic report on canvas, 35,4" x 35,4"
2
Boats, 1975, photographic report on canvas, 31,5" x 19,7"
3
Egg « primarolo », 1975, photographic reports on canvas, 70,9" x 23,6"

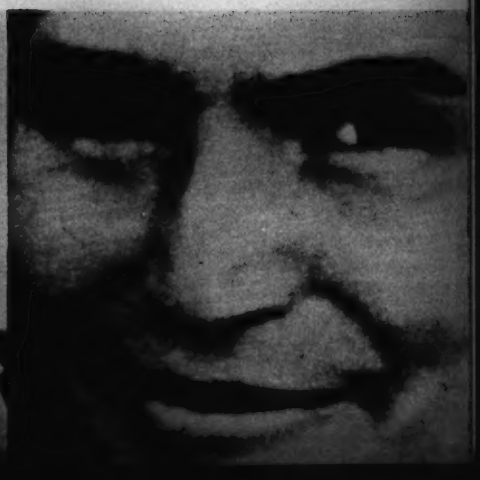
Sequences

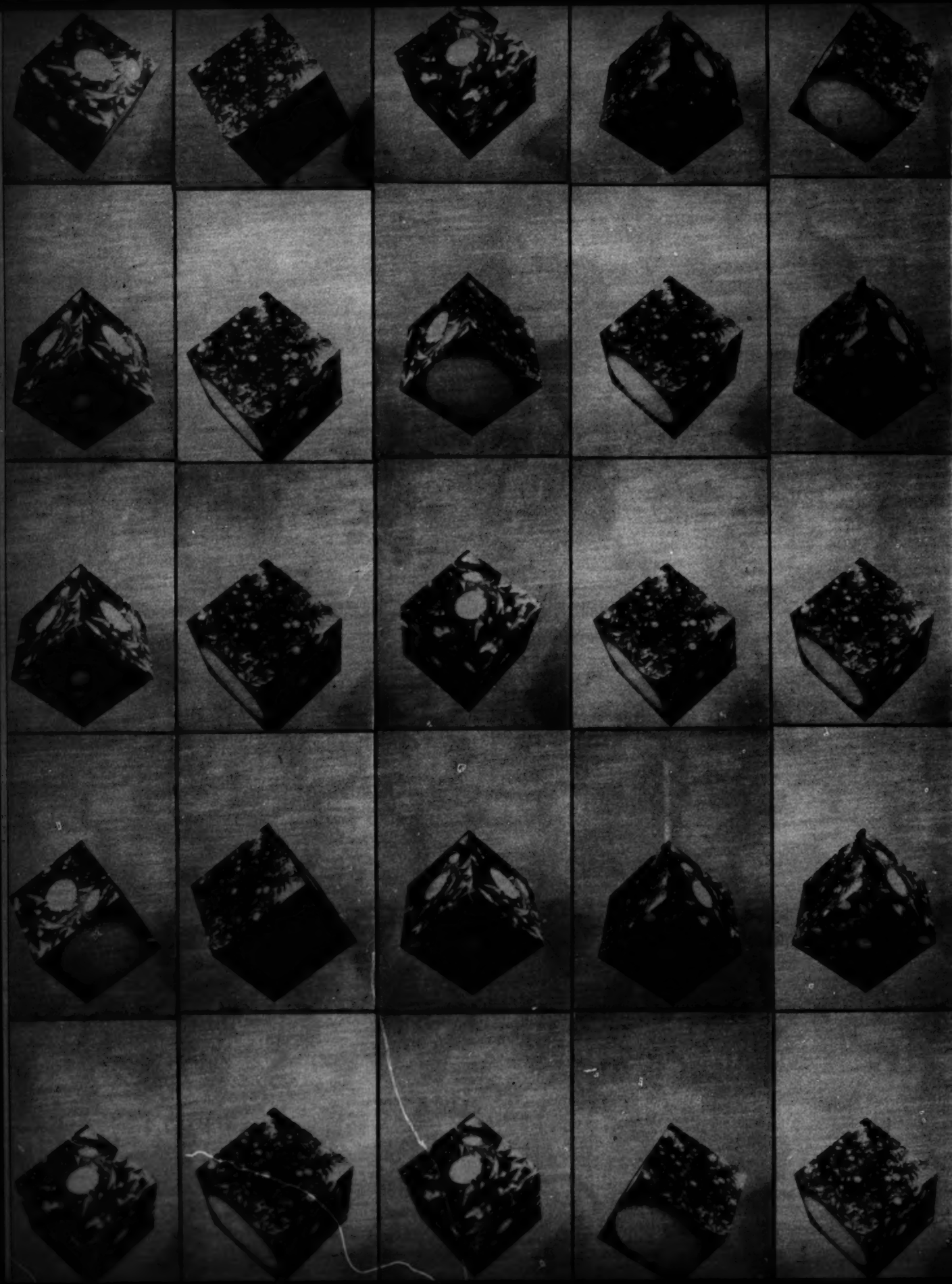
4
Family group, 1976, photographic reports on canvas, 94,5" x 31,5"
5
Hen with chickens, 1976, photographic reports on canvas, 124,02" x 35,4"
6
Woman with little girl, 1976, photographic reports on canvas, 70,9" x 23,6"
7
Olive grove, 1976, photographic reports on canvas, 88,58" x 29,53"

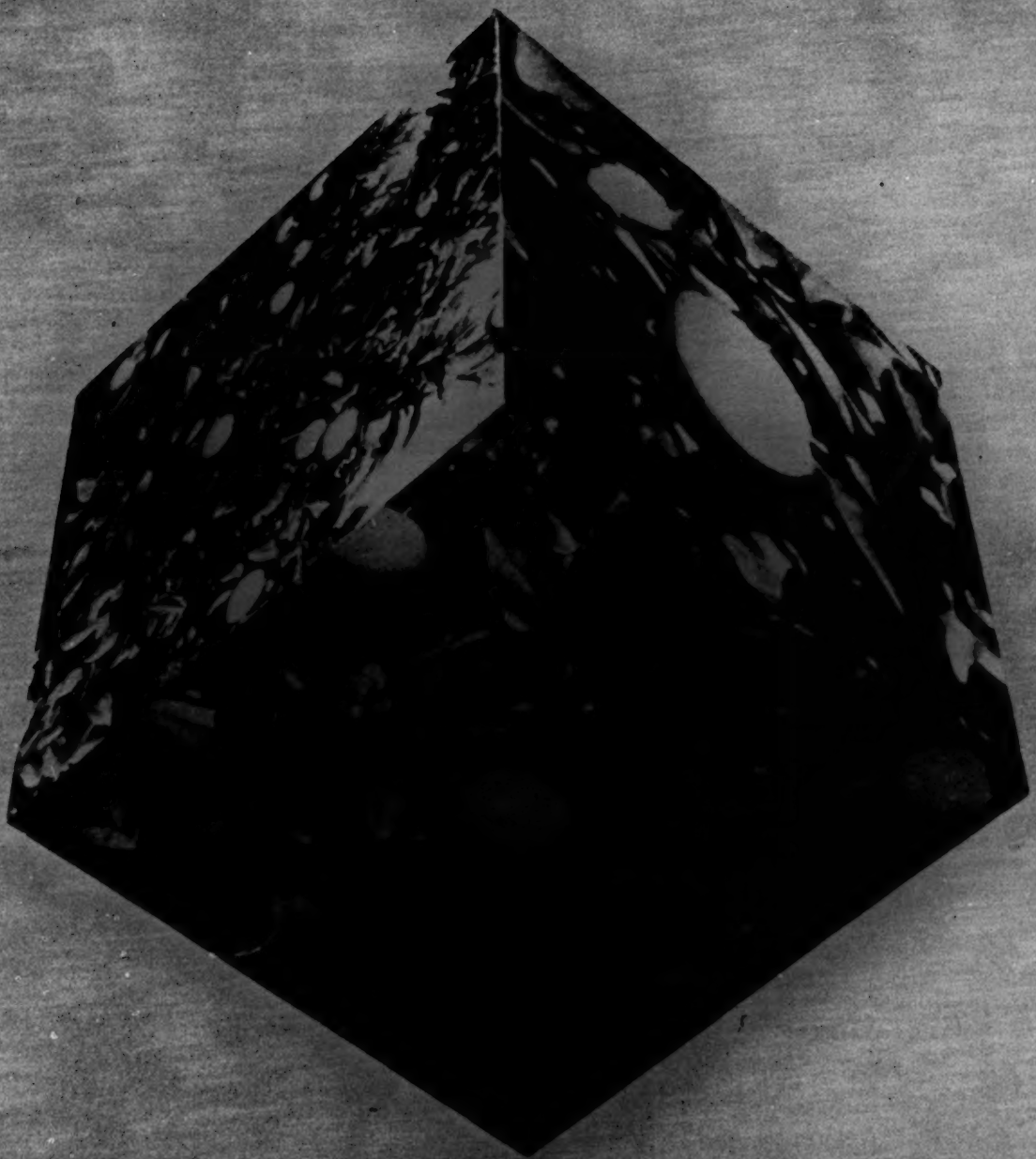
Iconocubes

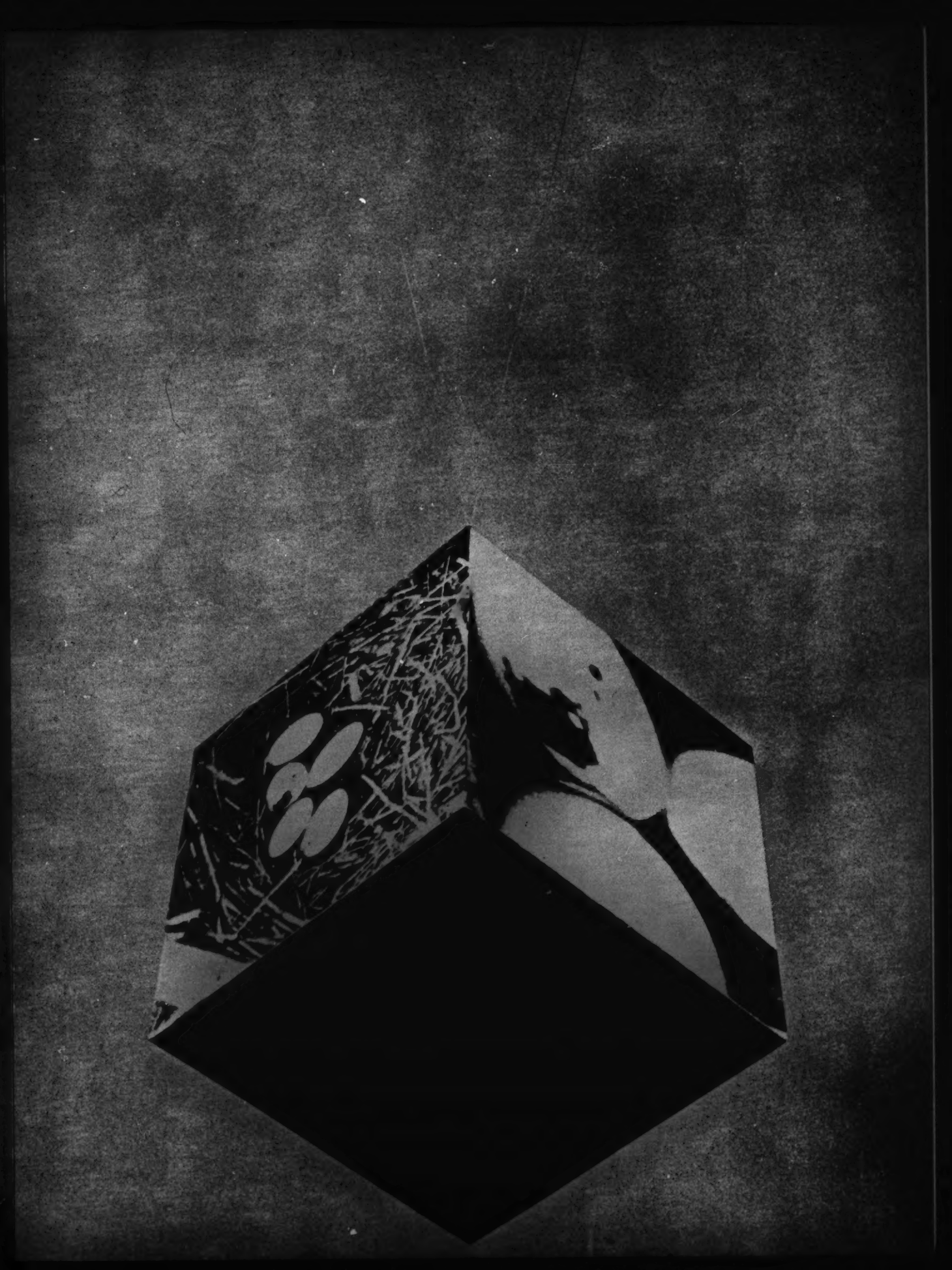
8
Boy, 1976, photographic reports on canvas + wood, side 13,78"
9
Orange grove, 1976, photographic reports on canvas + wood, side 17,72"
10
Boat, 1976, photographic reports on canvas + wood, side 11,81"
11
Eggs, 1976, photographic reports on canvas + wood, side 15,75"
12
Little girls, 1976, photographic reports on canvas + wood, side 25,59"
13
Little boy, 1976, photographic reports on canvas + wood, side 21,65"
14
Embroidering woman, 1976, photographic reports on canvas + wood, side 29,53"











The uniqueness of the photographic medium lies in the fact that only the camera can solve the mysteries of realistic imagery. However it is to be remembered that the theoretical as well as the technological origins of the photographic machine are firmly rooted in the painterly traditions of Western art.

While it is commonly supposed that photography is itself a product of advanced technology, it should be pointed out that in terms of photographic realism the technology of the modern camera is quite dispensible. For many centuries, painters have relied upon a device commonly called the camera obscura to aid them in making their paintings better — in other words, more realistic.

The camera obscura predated the invention of the photograph by at least three hundred years. Thus, the principles of photography and the language of photographic realism themselves antedate the nineteenth century technological breakthroughs. They demonstrate, in principle at least, that photography and painting have been cognate media, each complementing the other to a greater or lesses degree.

The new works by Xante Battaglia demonstrate the contemporary relationship between painting, on one hand, and photography, on the other. Battaglia realizes the essential sympathies that relate the two media, and in his art we find such a relationship brilliantly illustrated.

It can be said that Battaglia's new work is neither photographic nor painterly. Yet it is actually both. In fact it is unique because it represents a marriage of the finest qualities of both media. The essential properties of photography, and the vital plastic and graphic properties of the art of painting are both incorporated in these works.

The painterly issues that are so smoothly and spectacularly accommodated include spacial arrangement, appreciation of the modernist awareness concerning the flatness of the picture plane and the limitations imposed by the edge; these are combined with the very basic compositional decisions that serve to distinguish Battaglia's art and that insure it a place among the best of today's art.

The photographic issues that relate so intelligently to the painterly verdict are realized in several ways, and these include seriel pattern, progressive enlargement of images, and graphic relationships between photographic subject matter and spacial realities.

That photography is unique and possesses its own special characteristics has been established. What has emerged as the most fertile arena for new speculation is the fact that photography is also highly dependent upon the traditional arts. It can never fully operate outside the formal esthetic realities of western pictorial tradition.

The visual lexicon is not exclusively defined by any one medium. The new possibilities offered by such an awareness are limitless; they are represented by a variety of urgent developments offered by artists today within the Realist, and Conceptual forms. Yet Battaglia's straight-forward exercizes represent the very best work, accomplished to date, that can help us to understand the properties and the potential of realistic imagery, and its plastic coadjutors.

A discussion of contemporary art involving specific, referential imagery rarely concentrates upon the images themselves. Rather, the art historical, the theoretical and the philosophical qualities of the work dominate any such speculation.

Yet a word should be said for Battaglia's choice of images. They seem deliberately played down, but not to the point where they become completely non-interpretable. Battaglia's imagery is not sensational; it is not minimal either. It is real, it is simple and it is touching. It is as if Battaglia has deliberately selected images that contain appreceable meaning, and such chosing represents a confidence and awareness that are not typical of much present day referential art, but that will probiably become an important idea in the art of the immediate future.

Gregory Battcock
New York City, May 1976

Xante Battaglia and The New Cube

Words and numbers become informative when they are arranged in sequence designed by a writer, an artist or scientist. It is the sequence that determines the value, or usefullness, of the information. To deliberately alter, interrupt, abridge or otherwise upset the sequence is to destroy the information. Or is it?
In certain instances a distorted sequence can provide new information, information based upon the very same letters, words and numbers. What happens is that the material of which the words or numbers are made of replaces the informational content that has been ruined. In effect the letters and numbers earn license from a new and perhaps higher authority.
The figures appearing on the new cubes are transposed imargery, as they come from original pen forms transposed through photography to a location on canvas. The journey is completed when the original become at one with the three dimensional surface, which in this case is represented by the cube.
The new cubes of Battaglia are thought provoking because of their positive challenges to language, numerology, logic and the transportation of images through several contexts, all according to the aesthetic principles of post-Minimalist art.

Gregory Battcock
Venice, July 1976
Critical review of the Iconocube exhibited at the Biennale in Venice 1976

Biography

1943
Xante Battaglia was born in Gioia Tauro, Reggio Calabria, Italy.
After graduating at the state institute of art in Reggio Calabria, he attended the Brera Academy in Milan.
He lives in Milan.

One-man shows

1966
Gallery Il Traghetto, Venice
1967
Gallery 32, Milan
Gallery Il Traghetto 2, Venice
1969
Gallery Cortina, Milan
Gallery Il Salotto, Como
Gallery Il Punto, Turin
1970
Gallery Il Prisma, Verona
University, Messina
1972
Gallery Il Traghetto 2, Venice
1973
Gallery New Gallery, Catania
1974
Gallery Il Fondaco, Messina
Gallery Manzoni, Milan
Gallery « Genova », Genoa
1975
Gallery Interarte, Milan
1977
Gallery Bonino, New York

Group exhibitions

1966
Gallery 32, Milan
Continuity of art, gallery 32, Milan and itinerant in Udine, Trieste, Palermo
1967
Presences at Sesto, Royal Palace, Milan
1968
San Fedele Center, Milan
1969
Masters of contemporary Italian art, gallery Vitruvio, Milan
4th national review of painting City of Varazze, Varazze
1971
Exhibition d'après, museum villa Ciani, Lugano
1972
Gallery Saint Léger, Geneva
Great and young people of today, Grand Palais, Paris
Gallery Il Traghetto, Venice
Gallery Cortina, Milan
Gallery Michelangelo, Bergamo
1973
Great and young people of today, Grand Palais, Paris
Show of painters indicated by Bolaffi, Bolaffi hall, Turin
1974
Museum villa Ciani, painting and music exhibition, Lugano
1976
Biennale in Venice, Italian section

Bibliography

1965
Leonida Repaci, for Xante Battaglia, arte, May 12, Milan

1966
Franco Passoni, catalogue, show of Battaglia, gallery il Traghetto, October, Venice
Lisiani, The colour of Battaglia, « La Notte », November 29, Milan
Franco Passoni, Il traghetto, « Avanti », October 16, Milan
1967
Carlo Munari, catalogue, show of Battaglia, gallery 32, April, Milan
Giorgio Kaisserlian, Battaglia, « Il Popolo », April 25, Rome
Mario Lepore, Art. exhibitions in Milan, « Corriere d'Informazione », April 26, Milan
Franco Passoni, Thirtytwo, « Avanti », April 27, Milan
Giorgio Kaisserlian, catalogue, show of Battaglia, gallery il Traghetto 2, Sept., Venice
Isa Petrozzani, Battaglia, « Il Gazzettino Veneto », October 20, Venice
1968
Franco Passoni, Xante Battaglia the painter of women expecting, « Arianna », No. 144, Milan
Carlo Munari, Xante Battaglia, D'ars agency, No. 34, Milan
Luciana Jorio, A one-man show of the painter Xante Battaglia in Venice, « Il Messaggero Veneto », September 27, Venice
Paolo Rizzi, Battaglia, « Il Gazzettino », October 1st, Venice
The cut on Mao's face contested, « Corriere della Sera », May 12, Milan
1969
Dino Buzzati, Art exhibitions, « Corriere della Sera », April 1st, Milan
Patrizio Fusar, The world leaders all contested, « Il Giorno », April 24, Milan
G. M. Jonghi Lavarini, A cut in sign of disdain, « Casa, arredamento, giardino », Numbers 15-16, Milan
Aurelio Natali, catalogue, show of Battaglia, gallery il Salotto, October, Como
Mario Radice, interesting show of extreme actuality, « La provincia », October 24, Como
Aurelio Natali, gallery Salotto: Xante Battaglia, « Nac », No. 24, Milan
F. Passoni, S. Presta, Xante Battaglia, catalogue, show of Battaglia, gallery Cortina, April, Milan
Renzo Pellegrini, Yet another disconcerting episode on the « Lavorini case », strange posters affixed in Viareggio, « Il Telegrafo », July 4, Viareggio
U.D., Blue posters dedicated to Ermann, « La Nazione », July 4, Viareggio
It's the painter Battaglia who created the Lavorini posters, « Avvenire », July 5, Milan
Posters upon Lavorini disfigured, « Corriere della Sera », July 6, Milan
The posters of Ermanno and a precising comment by the police commissariat, « Il Telegrafo », July 7, Viareggio
1970
The cuts of Battaglia, « Gazzetta del Sud », June 12, Reggio Calabria
Michel Tapiè, catalogue, show of Battaglia, gallery il Punto, January, Turin
Xante Battaglia, Meeting, playing with slides, « Casa, arredamento, giardino », September, Milan
Xante Battaglia, Methodology at the Rimini meeting, « Casa, arredamento, giardino », November, Milan
Michel Tapiè, Xante Battaglia, catalogue, show of Battaglia, gallery il Traghetto 2, July, Venice
Michel Tapiè, catalogue, show of Battaglia, May, University of Messina
1971
Lorenzo Vincenti, They do advertising for us with the technique used for detergents, « Oggi », September, Milan
Luigi Carluccio, Interesting show of Xante Battaglia, « Gazzetta del Popolo », January 17, Turin
Angelo Dragoni, Battaglia, « La Stampa », January 18, Turin
1972
Franco Passoni, Xante Battaglia, published by Ieda, Milan
1973
Bolaffi catalogue, artists indicated by Bolaffi 1973, publisher Bolaffi, Turin
Adjourned encyclopedia of modern art, publisher Idaf, Milan
Pedro Fiori, From the telluric myth to the disfigured image to the iconographic microcosm, « Arte duemila », December, Milan
1976
Michel Tapiè, Virgilio Dagnino, International collection, Ieda, May, Milan
Gregory Battcock, Xante Battaglia and the new cube, catalogue for the Biennale in Venice, September, Milan
1977
Gregory Battcock, catalogue, show of Battaglia, gallery Bonino, January, New York

Bonino Gallery
98 Prince Street
10012 New York City
Phone: 7529556
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